

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3510

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: RC MODERATES APPARENTLY STRENGTHENED

REF: LISBON 3479 AND 3491

SUMMARY: JUNE 21 REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) STATEMENT HAS BROUGHT SIGH OF RELIEF TO TENSE POLITICAL SCENE. MODERATE PARTIES, LED BY SOCIALISTS, HAVE PRAISED RC REAFFIRMATION OF PLURALISM. COMMUNISTS HAVE ISSUED PRO FORMA STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, WHILE COMMUNIST-LINING PRESS HAS DOWNPLAYED RC STATEMENT. HARSH ECONOMIC REALITIES AND TOUGH "NO DEMOCRACY, NO AID" LINE PORTUGUESE LEADERS HAVE BEEN GETTING APPEARS TO HAVE STRENGTHENED HAND OF RC MODERATES. WHILE STATEMENT IS ENCOURAGING, REAL TEST OF RC ACCEPTANCE OF PLURALISM WILL BE HOW IT DEALS WITH REPUBLICA AND RADIO RENASCENCA CASES. END SUMMARY

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1. THE MAJOR PROTAGONISTS ON POLITICAL SCENE HAVE GREETED

JUNE 21 REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) DECLARATION WITH SIGH OF RELIEF. INDICATIVE OF GENERAL IF TEMPORARY, RELAXATION OF TENSIONS IS DECISION TO SEND DELEGATION CONSISTING OF PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES, GENERAL OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO AND FOUR MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO TO MOZAMBIQUE INDEPENDENCE CEREMONIES ON JUNE 25.

2. PUBLIC REACTION BY MAJOR MODERATE PARTIES (SOCIALISTS AND POPULAR DEMOCRATS) HAS BEEN MILDLY EUPHORIC. SOCIALISTS (PS) HAVE FLOODED LISBON WITH 300,000 PAMPHLETS RENEWING CALL FOR JUNE 23 DEMONSTRATION IN SUPPORT OF POLITICAL PLURALISM, THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, AND PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES (SEE LISBON 3478). PPD HAS ALSO PRAISED RC'S REDEDICATION TO PLURALISM. CENTER SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE RESPONDED IN MORE MEASURED TERMS, CITING BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF DECLARATION. COMMUNISTS HAVE ISSUED LARGELY PRO FORMA STATEMENT OF SUPPORT AND ANNOUNCED PARTY WILL NOT TAKE PART IN JUNE 23 PS-SPONSORED RALLY. ASKED FOR COMMENT, CUNHAL WAS GUARDED. SAID ONLY THAT STATEMENT CORRESPONDED TO PRESENT SITUATION AND THAT HE HAD NOT HAD TIME TO ANALYZE IT PROPERLY.

3. COMMUNIST-LINING "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" AND "SEculo" HAVE STRESSED COMMUNIQUE'S REFERENCE TO CLASSLESS SOCIETY AND DOWNPLAYED REFERENCES TO PLURALISM. BOTH DAILIES CAME OUT WITH SPECIAL ADDITIONS JUNE 21 CARRYING FULL TEXT OF RC STATEMENT. BOTH PAPERS AGAIN RAN FULL TEXT JUNE 23 BUT WITH NOTABLE LACK OF COMMENTARY. MODERATE "JORNAL NOVO", ON OTHER HAND, GREETED AFM STATEMENT WITH ENTHUSIASM AND LARGE HEADLINE SAYING "REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL REAFFIRMS PLURALISM."

4. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED, BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO VERIFY YET, THAT THE VOTE ON THE NEW AFM DOCUMENT WAS 16 FOR, 6 AGAINST, AND 6 ABSTENTIONS. THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO REPORTEDLY VOTED AGAINST, IS SAID TO HAVE RESIGNED BUT IS STAYING ON AT LEAST FOR THE INTERIM BECAUSE ANTUNES' REFUSED TO TAKE JOB. SAME SOURCE SAYS THAT VICTORY FOR MODERATES WAS CONSIDERABLY MORE EVIDENT THAN LANGUAGE OF AFM STATEMENT INDICATES.

5. COMMENT: RC STATEMENT IS ENCOURAGING. FACED WITH OPTION OF BYPASSING PARTIES AND LURCHING FARTHER TO LEFT ECONOMICALLY
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AND POLITICALLY, RC HAS CHOSEN TO MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT TO CO-EXIST WITH PARTIES, ALBEIT ON RC TERMS.

6. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT ECONOMIC REALITIES AND TOUGH "NO DEMOCRACY, NO AID" LINE THAT PORTUGUESE GOT AT NATO SUMMIT, DURING COSTA GOMES' VISIT TO FRANCE, AND FROM EC PRESIDENT FITZGERALD MAY HAVE STRENGTHENED HAND OF RC MODERATES. WISHFUL THINKING TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, THE AFM MAY BE

BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF PORTUGAL IS IN EUROPE, AND THAT REAL ASSISTANCE WILL NOT COME FROM THE THIRD WORLD OR THE SOVIETS. AT SAME TIME AFM KNOWS THAT IT CANNOT TAKE POLITICAL RISK OF DRIVING ECONOMY SO FAR DOWN THAT A CHALLENGE TO AFM CONTROL WILL RECEIVE WIDE SUPPORT FROM POPULATION. THUS, THE DOOR TO EUROPE CAN NOT BE CLOSED.

7. IN NEAR-TERM, REAL TEST OF RC ACCEPTANCE OF PLURALISM WILL BE HOW RC DEALS WITH CONCRETE PROBLEMS STILL OUTSTANDING, NAMELY REPUBLICA AND RADIO RENASCENCA (RR). UNLESS THESE CASES ARE HANDLED IN MANNER WHICH PRESERVES FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (E.E. RETURNING REPUBLICA TO SOCIALISTS AND RR TO CHURCH), RC DEDICATION TO PLURALISM WILL HAVE HOLLOW RING. SOCIALISTS AND CHURCH HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION TO PRESS ISSUE.
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